

Message Text

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SUBJ: CASTRO VISIT TO MEXICO POSTPONED AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS
IN MEXICAN-CUBAN RELATIONS

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A VISIT BY A CUBAN ECONOMIC DELEGATION, CUBAN AMBASSADOR FERNANDO LOPEZ MUINO USED THE OCCASION OF A PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 20 ON ECONOMIC MATTERS TO ANNOUNCE THAT FIDEL CASTRO WILL NOT VISIT MEXICO IN MARCH DUE TO OTHER "PRIOR" COMMITMENTS LOPEZ NOTING THAT MEXICAN-CUBAN RELATIONS HAVE BECOME "FRATERNAL" UNDER PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA EMPHASIZED THAT CASTRO HAD NOT CANCELLED OR EVEN POSTPONED HIS VISIT BECAUSE NO DATE FOR THE VISIT HAD EVER BEEN SET OFFICIALLY. THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID THAT CASTRO ARDENTLY WISHES TO AND WILL VISIT MEXICO, BUT ADDED THAT NO DATE HAS BEEN SET.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S QUESTION ABOUT CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, LOPEZ SAID THAT IT IS HIS COUNTRY'S POLICY "TO GIVE AID TO ALL COUNTRIES WHICH STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE." IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON KISSINGER'S RECENT WARNING THAT THE US WILL NOT TOLERATE CUBAN ARMED
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INTERVENTION IN OTHER NATIONS, CUBAN MIN FOR THE IRON

AND STEEL INDUSTRY LESTER RODRIGUEZ REPORTEDLY SMILED AND SAID "MR. KISSINGER CAN SAY AND WARN ABOUT WHATEVER HE LIKES, AND HIS ATTITUDE OF BLACKMAIL TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE AND WIN FAVORABLE VOTES IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS COUNTRY'S AID TO OTHER NATIONS IS NOT SURPRISING". AMB LOPEZ ADDED THAT KISSINGER'S VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA REPRESENTS A THREAT TO ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS SELA.

3. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, LOPEZ AND RODRIGUEZ ANNOUNCED THE SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS WITH MEXICO IN THE FIELD OF SUGAR PRODUCTION, METALURGY, IRON, CHEMICALS, AND STAINLESS STEEL PRODUCTS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE ECONOMIC CONVENTION CONCLUDED BY CASTRO AND ECHEVERRIA LAST AUGUST 21. UNDER ONE OF THESE AGREEMENTS, THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL JOINTLY INVEST 6.4 MILLION US. DOLLARS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO SUGAR MILLS (ONE IN EACH COUNTRY). EACH MILL WILL HAVE AN ANNUAL CAPACITY OF 130 TO 150 MILLION TONS. RODRIGUEZ REPORTED THAT CUBAN EXPORTS TO MEXICO IN 1975 TOTALLED (\$US.) 1.5 MILLION AND CONSISTED OF TABACCO, RICE, NICKEL AND RUM. SINCE CUBA IS AN IMPORTANT CUSTOMER OF MEXICO, CUBAN HAD AN UNFAVORABLE BALANCE OF ABOUT \$(US) 32 MILLION LAST YEAR.

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